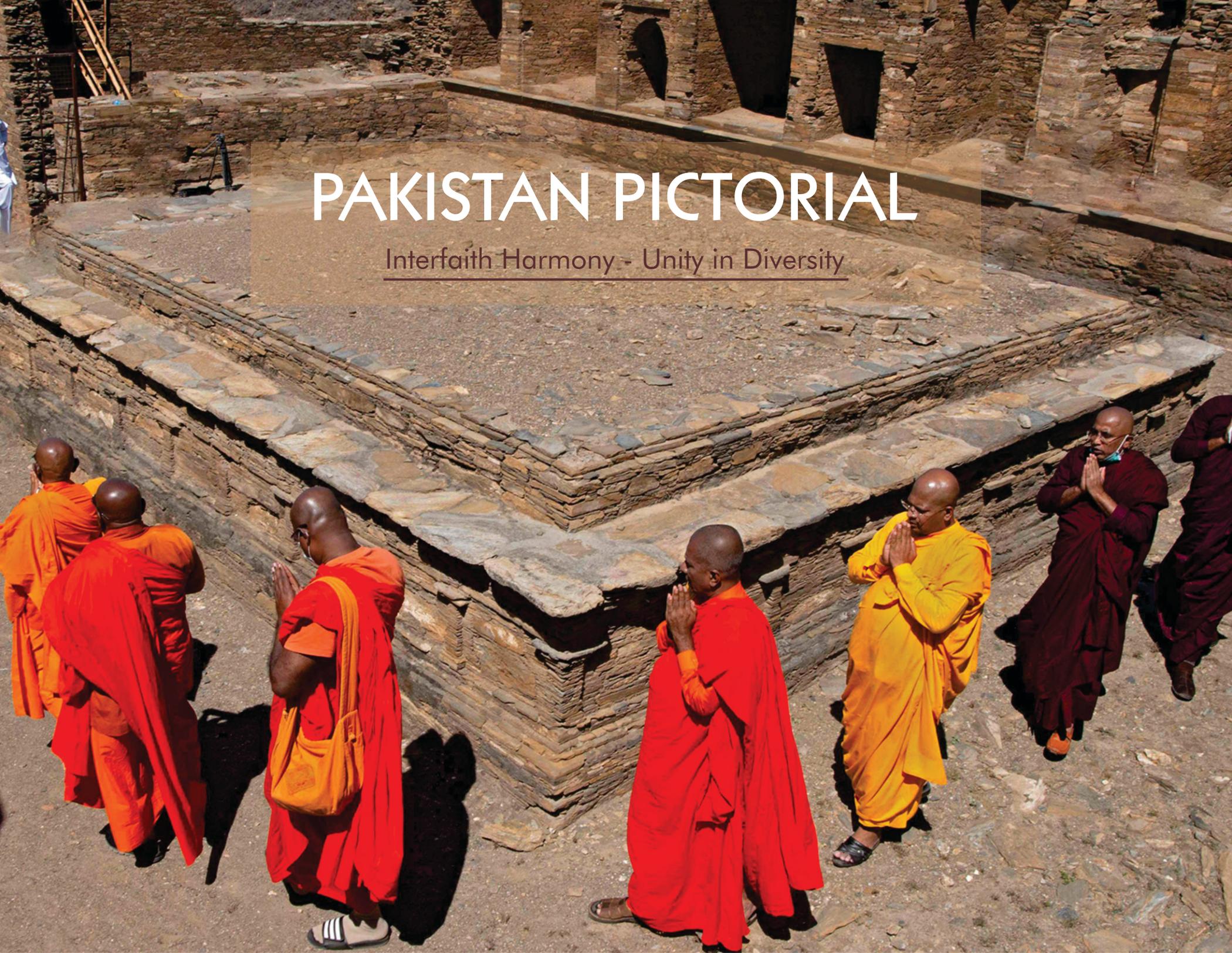


# PAKISTAN PICTORIAL

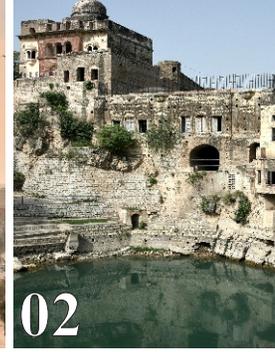
Interfaith Harmony - Unity in Diversity





Katas Raj Temples

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The Patrons of Interfaith Harmony

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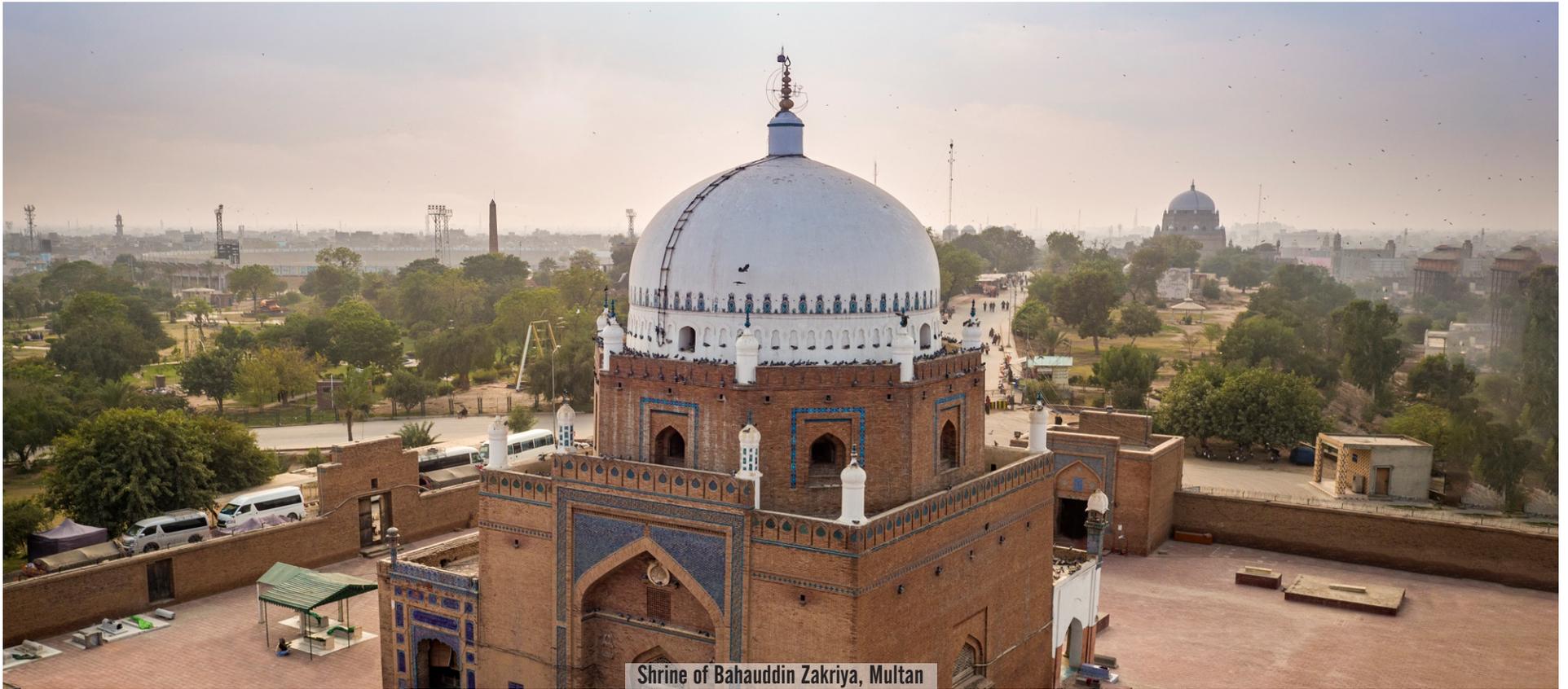


Shrine of Hazrat Shamsuddin Sabzwari, Multan

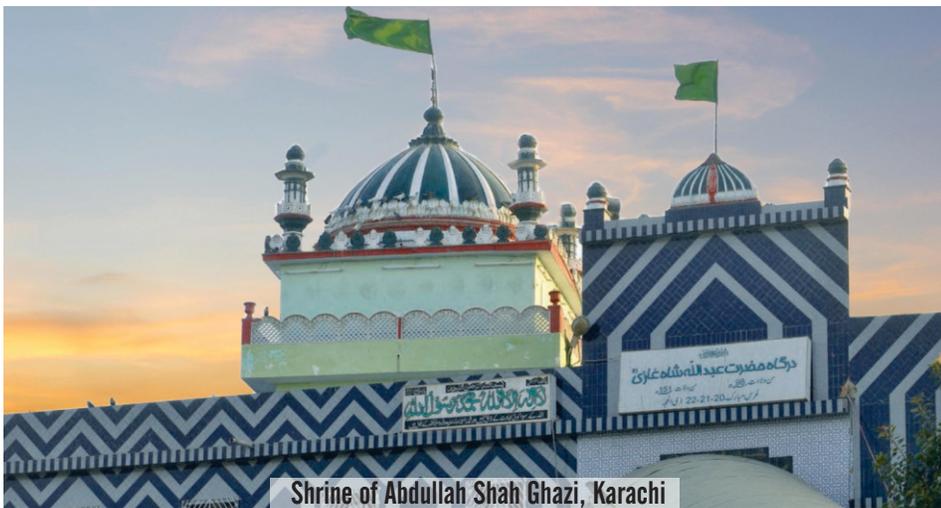


# Saints

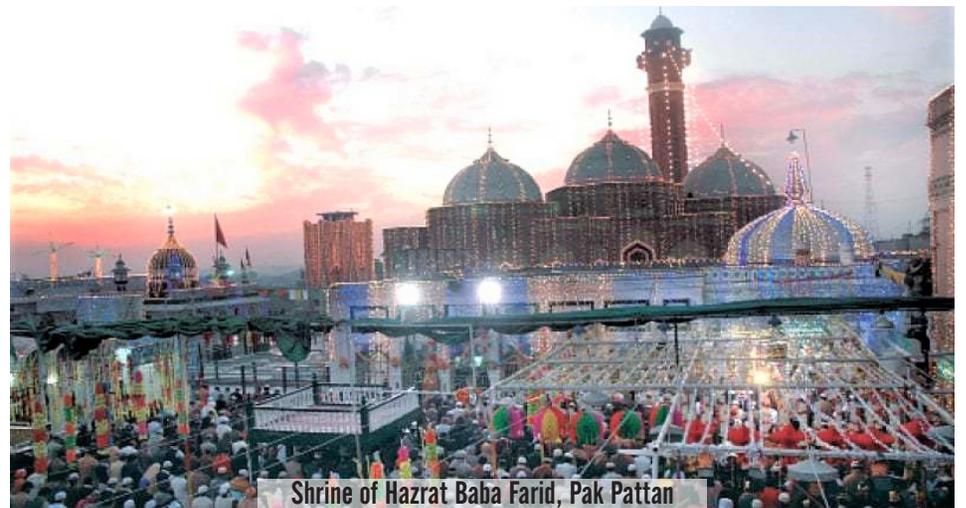
*The Protectors of Interfaith Harmony*



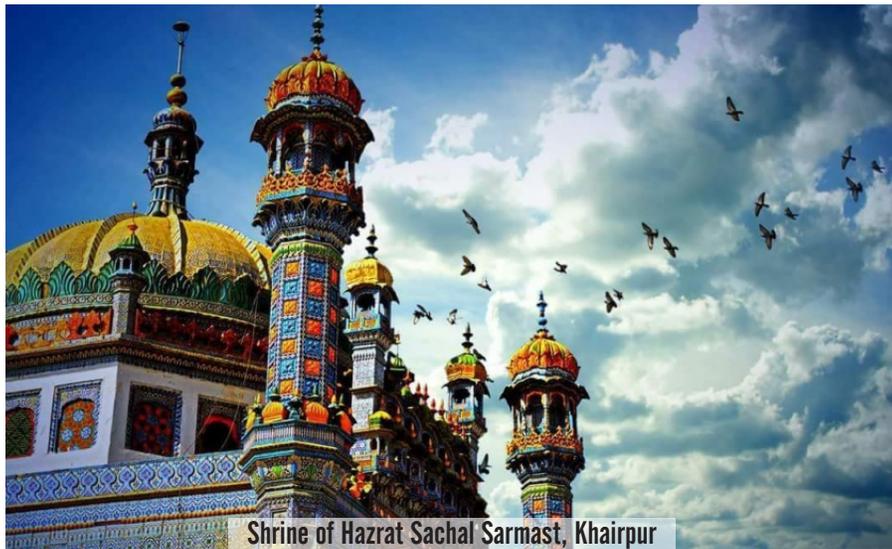
Shrine of Bahauddin Zakriya, Multan



Shrine of Abdullah Shah Ghazi, Karachi



Shrine of Hazrat Baba Farid, Pak Pattan



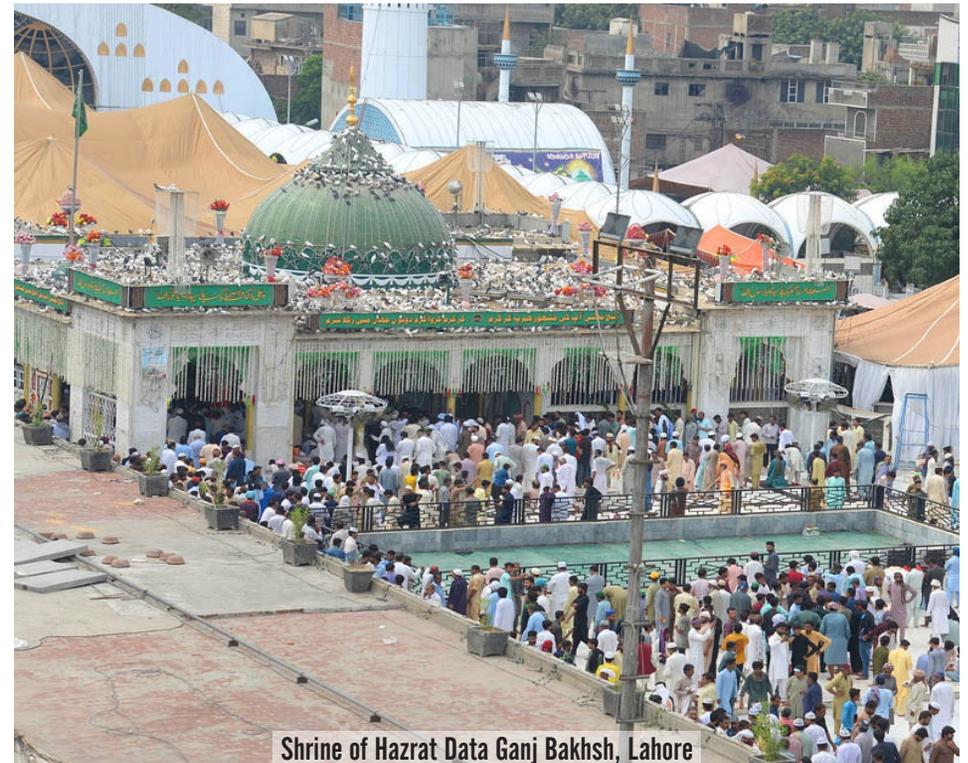
Shrine of Hazrat Sachal Sarmast, Khairpur

The Muslim ideology known as Sufism promotes mystical and individual devotion as well as oneness with God. It was developed in contrast to the formal, legalistic Islamic theology of the ninth century. It is a way of life and is indefinable. In the Muslim world, Sufism is referred to as Islamic mysticism. The Sufi saints had a significant role in the conversion to Islam in the subcontinent. They had a significant impact on public opinion through their fervour for religion and missions, their moral excellence, and their humanitarian endeavours.

As Sufi spiritual ideas diffused throughout the subcontinent, interfaith harmony began to develop among the population. The Sufis wanted to instil spiritual virtues in society, which made them popular amongst people of various religions. As a result, these Sufis had developed into a

bridge for communication and harmony between various religions of the subcontinent.

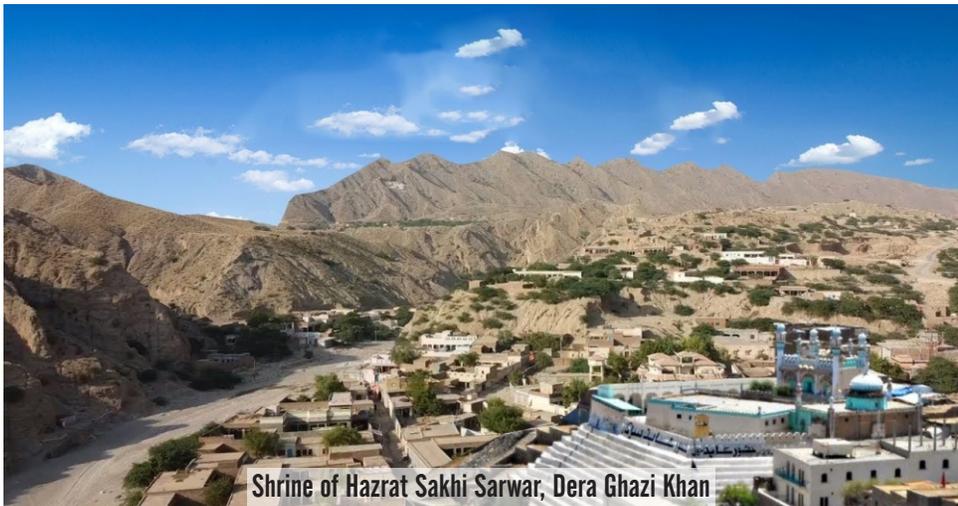
Sufism has played a vital role in promoting religious harmony in the history of the subcontinent. The saints penetrated a new spirit of tolerance, brotherhood, equality, and universal love in the masses. All people, irrespective of caste, creed, race, sex and religion, followed their teachings. They taught people about humanity, human relations based on equality, and tolerance for people belonging to various religions.



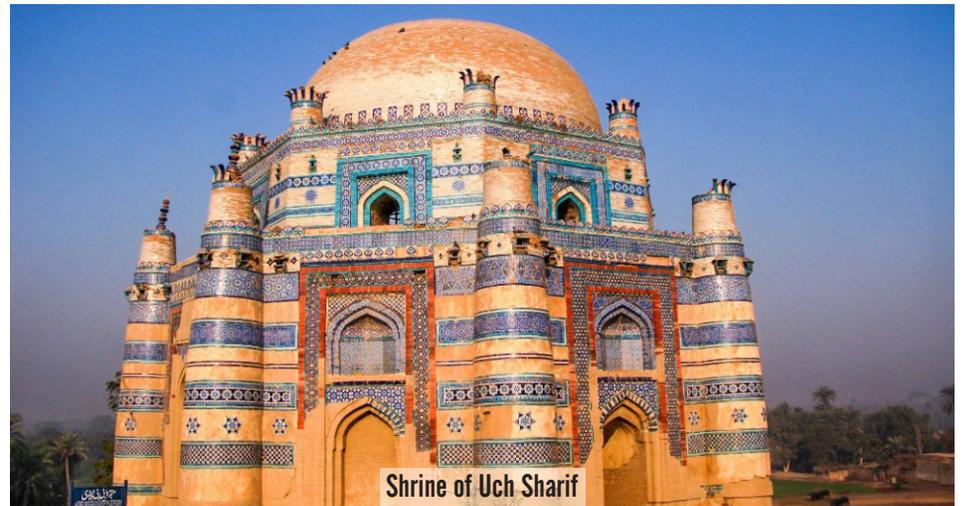
Shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, Lahore



Shrine of Hazrat Laal Shahbaz Qalandar, Sehwan Sharif



Shrine of Hazrat Sakhi Sarwar, Dera Ghazi Khan



Shrine of Uch Sharif



Devotees performing sufi dance at the Shrine of Sehwan Sharif



Shrine of Hazrat Shah Rukn-e-Alam, Multan



# Hinduism

*The Oldest Religion in Pakistan*



Katas Raj Temples, Chakwal





Chandragup Mud Volcano, Balochistan



After Islam, Hinduism is the second most popular religion in Pakistan, making up 1.73% of Pakistan's population, according to the 2017 Census. Although this percentage may seem low, the Hindu citizens of Pakistan are concentrated in their own communities, where they make up a large percentage of the local population. These include several districts of Sindh, namely Umerkot, Tharparkar, and Mithi, among many others.

Many Hindus in Pakistan adhere to the teachings of the region's Sufi saints, which again highlights the role of these saints who played in creating harmony between the two religious groups. Apart from Muslim saints, many Hindus also follow the teachings of the 14th-century saint Ramdevji, whose primary shrine, Shri Ramdev Pir temple, is situated in Tando Allahyar. Similarly, The Nanakpanth, a separate branch, adheres to the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, commonly referred to as the Sikhs' sacred book.

Today, the Hindi community of Pakistan have numerous forums and societies for their representation. The modern Hindu population in Pakistan are increasingly identifying with The International Society for Krishna Consciousness Society, more commonly known as ISKCON. Pakistan, too has an ISKCON presence. It engages in preaching and dispersing the Bhagavad Gita that has been translated into Urdu and has also started holding Rathayatras since 2015.

Furthermore, the Shiv Temple Society of Hazara specifically represents community interests in the Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and serves as the special guarantor for the Hindu Hazara community. However, the Pakistan Hindu Panchayat, Pakistan Hindu Council, Pakistan Hindu Youth Council, and the Pakistani Hindu Welfare Association are the primary civic organizations that represent and organize Hindu communities on social, economic, religious, and political issues in the majority of the country. Thirteen schools are administered by the Pakistan Hindu Council throughout Tharparkar, in addition to big Hindu weddings being held here as well.

Hindus in the Balochistan province have always lived a life of safety and security, experiencing little religious intolerance. The tribal leaders in Balochistan, notably the Jams of Lasbela and the Bugti of Dera Bugti, view non-Muslims like Hindus as members of their own extended family and promote religious freedom in the region. Additionally, when compared to its Hindu





Umerkot Shiv Mandir

population, Balochistan has a rather high number of Hindu temples. For instance, in the Lasbela District between Uthal and Bela jurisdiction, there are 18 temples for the 5,000 Hindus residing there, which, again, is a testimony to the religious freedom they live in. Hindus are allowed to practise their religion freely and coexist peacefully with Muslims in KPK Peshawar, Pakistan. Hindu tribes here have coexisted peacefully with Muslims and other religious groups ever since the division of the subcontinent. In addition to this, since many Hindus consider the Indus River to be sacred, the Pakistani government occasionally permits small groups of Hindus from India to come here on pilgrimages and to participate in the celebrations in Sindh and Punjab.

The Hindu community in Pakistan celebrate their festivals in complete freedom. These include Holi, Cheti Chand, Sagra, Mahalakshmi-a-jo-Sagro, Teejri, Akhan Teej, AUnn-Matyao, Ban Badhri, Somavati Umaas, Nandhi and Vaddi Thadri.



Hinglaj Mata Nani Mandir, Balochistan





Virawah Temple, Tharparkar



Durga Mata Temple, Tharparkar



Shri Varun Dev Mandir, Karachi



Hindu Rituals in Pakistan





# Christianity

*Our Monotheist Companions*

Christianity is the third most popular religion in Pakistan, with Christians making up 1.27% of the country's population. Of them, roughly half are Protestant, and half are Catholic, while there are a limited number of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christians in Pakistan. Rural Punjabi Christians make up a larger percentage of Pakistan's Christian population; some also speak Sindhi and Gujarati, while the remaining population is made up of upper- and middle-class Goan Christians and Anglo-Indians.

Even though the history of Christianity in Pakistan is unknown, the Thatta fakir (Muslim Sufi) group in Sindh province claims St. Thomas as its founder. Tradition has it that St. Thomas the Apostle travelled pastorally over the Indian subcontinent in the second part of the first century, passing through Pakistan's Taxila region. A first-century Christian presence in the area is inferred from an old stone cross discovered in the modern state of Punjab. Later on, Father Jill Perera was invited to Lahore by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1579, marking the beginning of the Church's recorded history.

We can also find a Roman Catholic community in Karachi that was started by Goan and Tamil immigrants during the construction of Karachi's infrastructure in the years between the two World Wars. Furthermore, in the early 19th century, Protestantism also emerged in the region, and a few Protestant organizations continued to carry out missions across Pakistan.



St. Mary's Cathedral, Multan 1855



St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar

Later on, in the 20th century, Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians became a part of the Christian community of the subcontinent as well. The three denominations and the Anglicans eventually came together to establish the Church of Pakistan in 1970.



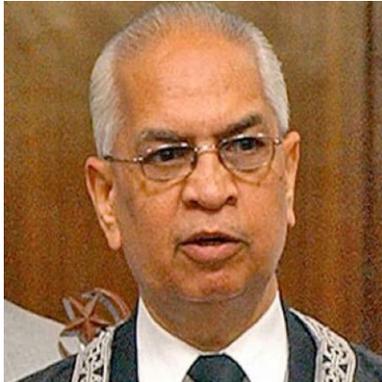
St. Paul's Church, Rawalpindi 1876

The Christian community has been an integral part of Pakistan since the beginning. They have contributed greatly to the services that are offered throughout the country, primarily in both education and health. Forman Christian College, St. Patrick's Institute of Science & Technology, and Saint Joseph's College for Women, Karachi, are just a few examples of church-run institutions in Pakistan. Christian educational institutions have provided education to students from all over Pakistan, regardless of their race, religion, or colour.

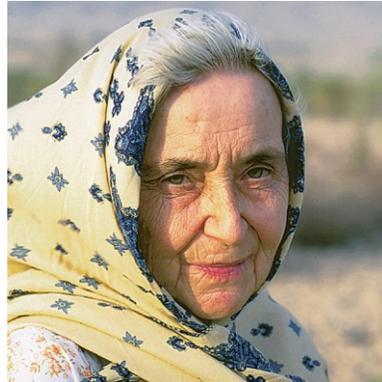
Throughout history, notable people have acquired their education from these institutions. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan attended Allama Iqbal Murray College in Sialkot, whereas Muhammad Ali Jinnah began his academic career at Karachi's Mission School. Many prominent politicians and professionals, including President General Musharraf, Late President General Zia ul Haq, General Asif Nawaz Janjua, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, and many more, were educated in Christian educational institutions.

Christian medical organizations spread out throughout the entire country, providing Pakistanis with affordable and remarkable health services. In addition to United Christian

# Icons From Various Religious Communities



Rana Bhagwan Das  
Ex Chief Justice of Pakistan



Ruth Pfau  
Doctor



Robin Ghosh  
Musician



Irene Parveen  
Singer



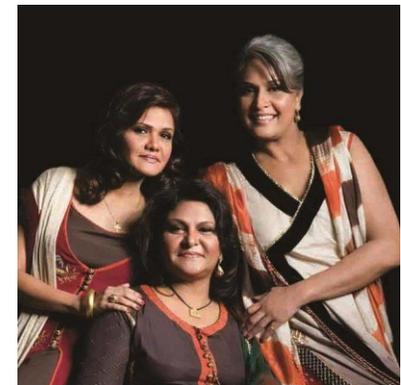
Anita Camphor  
Actress



Saleem Raza  
Singer



A. Nayyer  
Singer



Benjamin sisters  
Singers



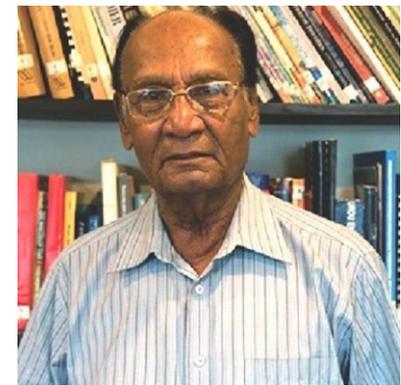
Bapsi Sidhwa  
Novelist



Shabnam  
Filmstar

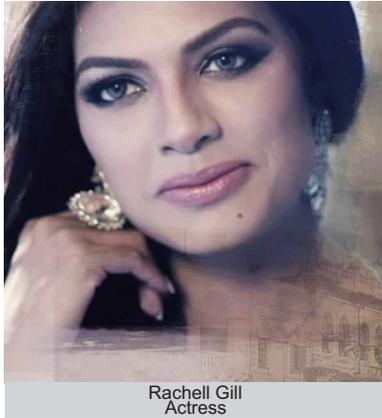


Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora  
Parliamentarian

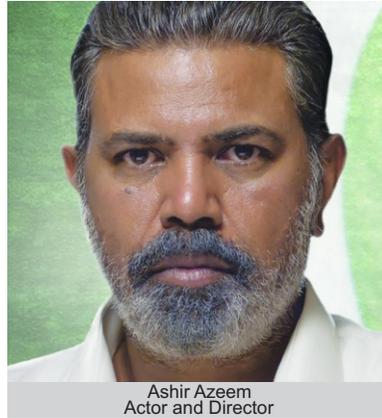


S.B. John (Guitarist and Composer)  
Best composer for South Asia

# Icons From Various Religious Communities



Rachell Gill  
Actress



Ashir Azeem  
Actor and Director



Krishna Kumari  
Senator



Zoe viccaji  
Singer



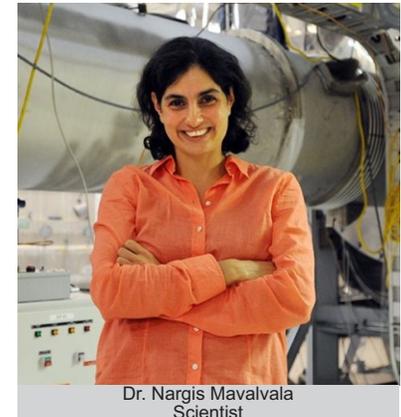
Harmeet Singh  
First Sikh News Anchor



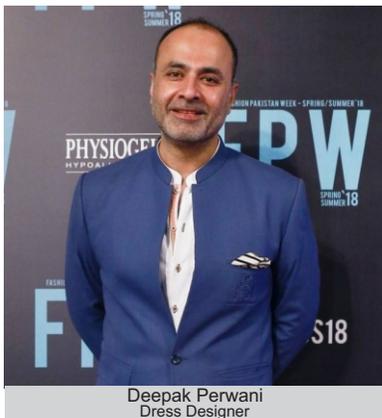
Azekah Daniel  
Actress



Danish Kaneria  
Cricketer



Dr. Nargis Mavalvala  
Scientist



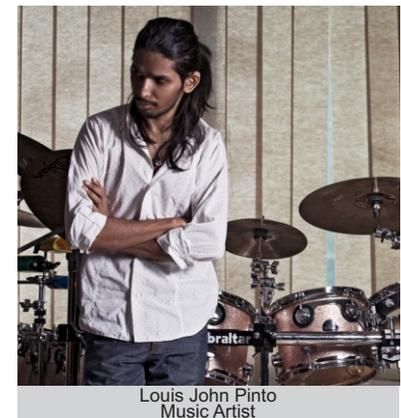
Deepak Perwani  
Dress Designer



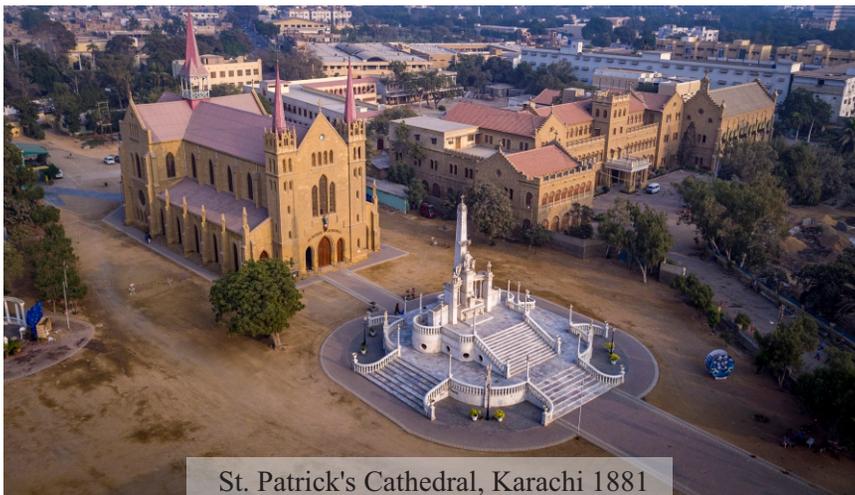
Sunita Marshall  
Actress



Bohemia  
Singer

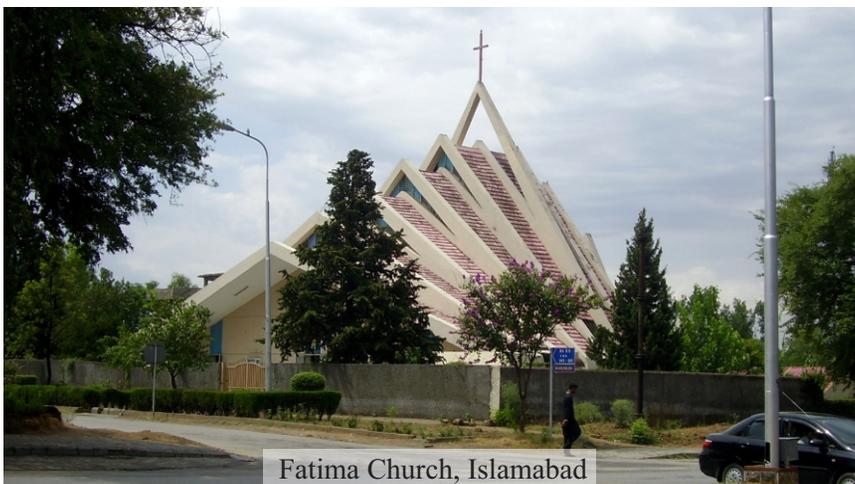


Louis John Pinto  
Music Artist



St. Patrick's Cathedral, Karachi 1881

Hospital in Lahore, St. Rafael Hospital in Faisalabad, Mission Hospital in Taxila, Tank, and other cities, Holy Family Hospitals in Karachi, Rawalpindi, and other cities are also well-known for their decades-long commitment to providing care to the poor and most vulnerable. Today, Christians across Pakistan are rendering their services in various sectors. They enjoy religious freedom and



Fatima Church, Islamabad



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Lahore 1907

celebrate their festivities in churches and homes spread out across the country. During these celebrations, several ministries, departments, and private companies organize special cake-cutting events to celebrate the festival with the Christian staff members and recognize their contributions to the country. Churches all around Pakistan host services, during which they pray for Pakistan's peace, progress, and prosperity as well as for the protection of mankind as a whole.



St Matthews Church, Nathia Gali



Christian Rituals in Pakistan





# Sikhism

*Pakistan The Home of Their Founder*



**Kartarpur Gurdwara**

Despite the fact that Pakistan has a very small Sikh population, the history and legacy of this religion in this country are significantly rich. There are notable Sikh communities in Lahore and Nankana Sahib in Punjab, which is a part of the broader Punjab area and where the religion first emerged in the Middle Ages. However, Pakistani Sikhs are not limited to this province since the majority of them have been residing in Peshawar in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa since the country's inception.

The fact that should also be mentioned. Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, which is ranked as the fifth-largest faith in the world, was born at Nankana Sahib, close to Lahore, in 1469. The highly regarded Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, also known as Gurdwara Janam Asthan, exists in its commemoration. Throughout the year, a sizable number of devotees visit the holy site, making it one of the most revered Sikh shrines in the world. The Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, an arm of the Pakistani government, is in charge of maintaining and preserving the ancient and sacred Sikh monuments.



One of the most famous Sikh holy places in the world, Gurdwara Dera Sahib or Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, is situated in the lovely town of Kartarpur in Tehsil Shakargarh. This holds great significance for the Sikh community since it is where Baba Guru Nanak spent his final years there. The 4.2-kilometre-long bridge between the Indian village of Dera Baba Nanak with the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in the Narowal region was officially opened in 2019 by the government of Pakistan. Through this "corridor of world peace and love", Sikh believers are allowed to cross the border to the Gurdwara without having to obtain a visa, becoming a monumental moment in the history of Pakistan and its steps toward religious freedom.





Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib, Hassan Abdal





Kartarpur Gurdwara



Gurdwara Sri Guru Arjan Dev, Lahore



Sikh Rituals in Pakistan



# Buddhism

*The Pre-Historic Heritage*



مہاتما بودھ بحالت مراقبہ  
Buddha in Meditation  
Mohra Moradu  
2nd - 3th Cent. A. D.



Takht-i-Bahi

Pakistan is the origin of Mahayana Buddhism, the greatest Buddhist sect today. More than half of its adherents are in Korea, Japan, China, Vietnam, Tibet, Malaysia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, and some other countries. Pakistan is revered by millions of Buddhists of all factions worldwide.

Pakistan is home to the ancient kingdom of Gandhara, and historically it had four capitals, stretching from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab. These capitals include Bagram, Charsadda, Taxila, and Peshwar. These four capitals have produced many Buddhist philosophers, and together they have become centres of Buddhist learning. The province of Gandhara in Pakistan fostered Mahayana Buddhism and the famed Gandhara culture, art, and learning. Gandhara contains the ancient and highly revered Buddhist stupas of Taxila and Swat. The Gilgit Manuscripts discovered in Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region are among the oldest surviving Buddhist scriptures.



As a Buddhist holy site, Pakistan is home to Buddhist heritage monuments, artwork, and iconography of unprecedented importance to Buddhist worshippers, scholars, and tourists. These relics have been able to retain their former glory centuries later. Pilgrims from India, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia often come to **Pakistan** to visit these sites. There are hundreds of Buddhist heritage sites scattered across Pakistan. Among them is the Dharmarajika Stupa in Takht-i-Bahi in KPK, the Votive Stupa, Shinggardar Stupa, the Amluk Dara Supa situated in Taxila, and an iconic Buddha statue in Swat. Recently, Bamala in KPK has emerged as a major Buddhist heritage site after the remains of a 1700 years old sleeping Buddha statue were discovered there.

The city of Taxila, about 35 kilometres from Islamabad, with its riches of archaeological sites, is generally regarded as the first stop by foreign tourists, particularly Buddhists. Most of the Buddhist archaeological

sites in Taxila were built between 600 BC and 500 AD and are located around the Taxila Museum. For over a thousand years, during the heydays of the Gandhara civilization, Taxila has remained a centre for promoting sculpture, architecture and education in Buddhism. Over 50 sites of archaeological importance are scattered within a radius of 30 kilometres around Taxila, and all of them are based on the life of Lord Buddha.

Some of the most important sites of Taxila are Dharmarajika Stupa, Bhir Mound, Sirkap, Jandial Temple and Julian Monastery. Relics relating to Buddhist heritage in Taxila are displayed in chronological order at the Taxila Museum, which attracts thousands of foreign as well as domestic tourists to explore the Buddhist heritage every year.

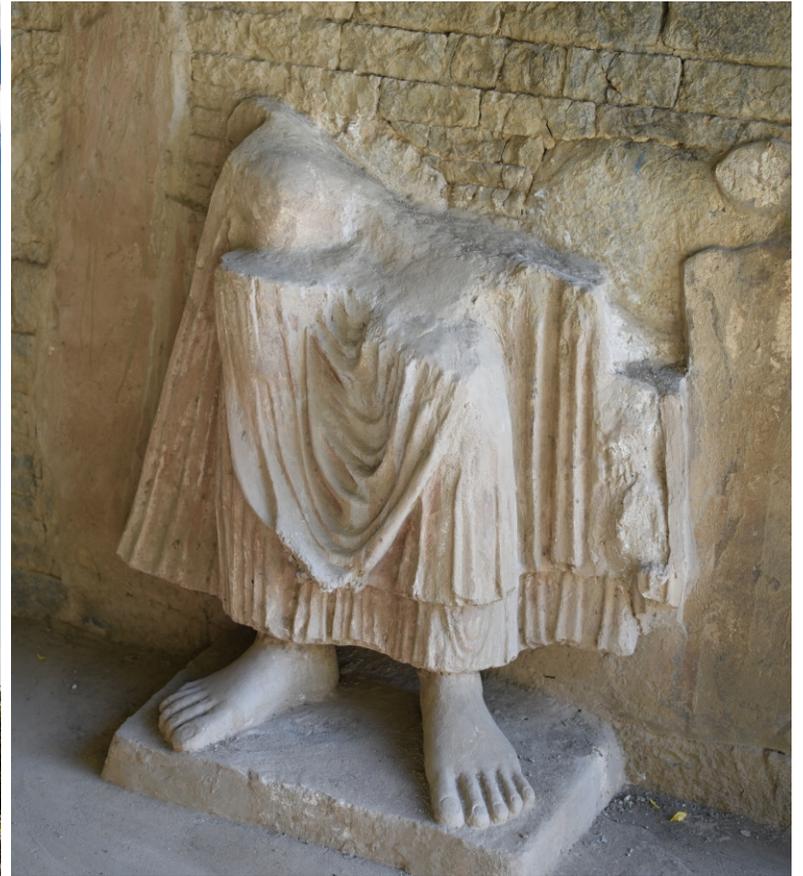
Tope Mankiala in Punjab is the Buddhist site where, according to a legend, Lord Buddha had fed seven hungry tiger cubs with his body parts. Around Peshawar city alone, there are over 500 heritage sites and monuments.





Another Buddhist site of archaeological and historical importance is in Takht-i-Bahi, which is located about 170 kilometres from Islamabad in KPK. The site comprises ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery situated high atop a 152-meter hill. During the Buddhist period of the Gandhara Kingdom to which Takht-i-Bahi belongs, some 1000 BC to the 7th century, the area that is now Northwest Pakistan and Southwest Afghanistan contained a number of such complexes. Takht-i-Bahi was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980 as the largest Buddhist archaeological site dating back to the Gandhara period. In addition to two stupas, it has many other relics and remains.

Although Pakistan has great significance when it comes to Buddhist heritage, it does not have a large Buddhist population. This is why the only functional Buddhist temple in Pakistan is located in the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad and is used by Buddhist diplomats from countries like Sri Lanka. Similarly, religious tourists from various countries visit Pakistan for these important Buddhist sites. The significance of Buddhism in Pakistan can be highlighted by the efforts the country has made to preserve these historical sites. Cultural heritage and historical monuments of all other religions and faiths are duly preserved and protected, making it an important pilgrimage site for the followers of Buddhism everywhere.





Manthal Budha



*Animism & The People of Kalash*



The Kalash are a small group of Indo-European speakers from South Asia who live in the Hindu Kush mountain valleys in Pakistan's northwest, close to the Afghan border. They are a distinct and affluent cultural group with religious traditions. The Kalash people are known to reside in three Hindu Kush valleys: Rumbur, Bumburet, and Birir, in the Chitral area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Due to their shared cultural traditions, the Rumbur and Bumburet groupings create a unified culture, but the Birir grouping, which is the most traditional of the three, forms a distinct culture all of its own.

The Nuristan Province of Afghanistan in the west, Swat and Gilgit in the east, Pamir Knot in the north, and Lowari Pass in the south all converge in this area.

The principal deities revered by the Kalash people in terms of their religious activities are Sajigor, Mahandeo, Balumain, Dezalik, Ingaw, and Jestak. The religious practises of the Kalash people fall into two categories. The first kind can be viewed as both religious and ceremonial, complete with singing and dancing, while the second type can be viewed as strictly religious, devoid of any such merriment. Joshi, Chaumos, Uchaw, and Pul/Poh are a few of their most important holidays.





Colors of Kalash



# Zoroastrianism

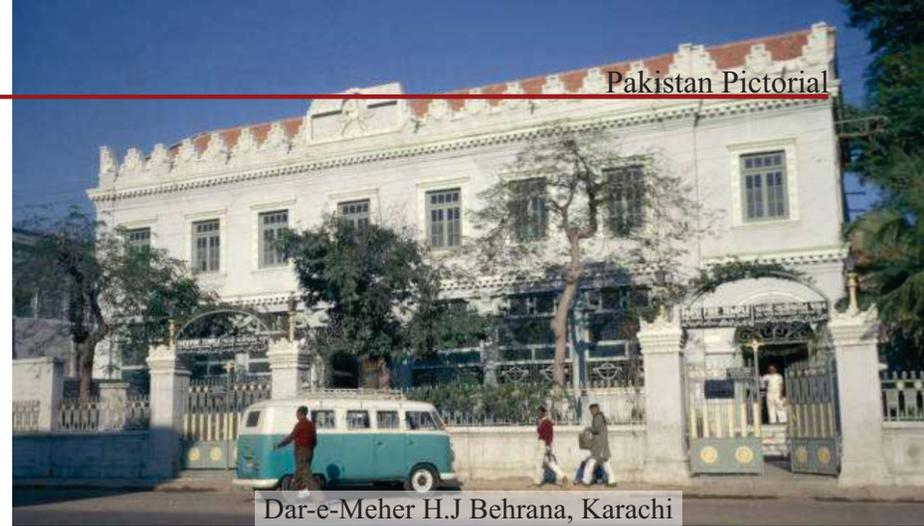
*The Original Persians*

PARSI FIRE TEMPLE  
ADMISSION ONLY TO  
PARSI ZOROASTRIANS

UNITE  
THE  
WORLD

The Parsis, whose name means "Persians", are descended from Persian Zoroastrians who immigrated to the Indian subcontinent during the Arab conquest of Iran. They live chiefly in Mumbai and in a few towns and villages, mostly to the south of Mumbai, but also a few minorities nearby in Karachi (Pakistan). The places of worship of the Parsi Community are known as Fire temples, Dar-e-Meher or Agiari. There are two worship places of the Parsi Community in Karachi. As per the statistics in Pakistan, the population of Parsis comprises 1092 people and is concentrated in the port city of Karachi. The Parsi Community has made a rich contribution to the establishment of prominent institutions in Karachi that are now serving the country in a quality manner.

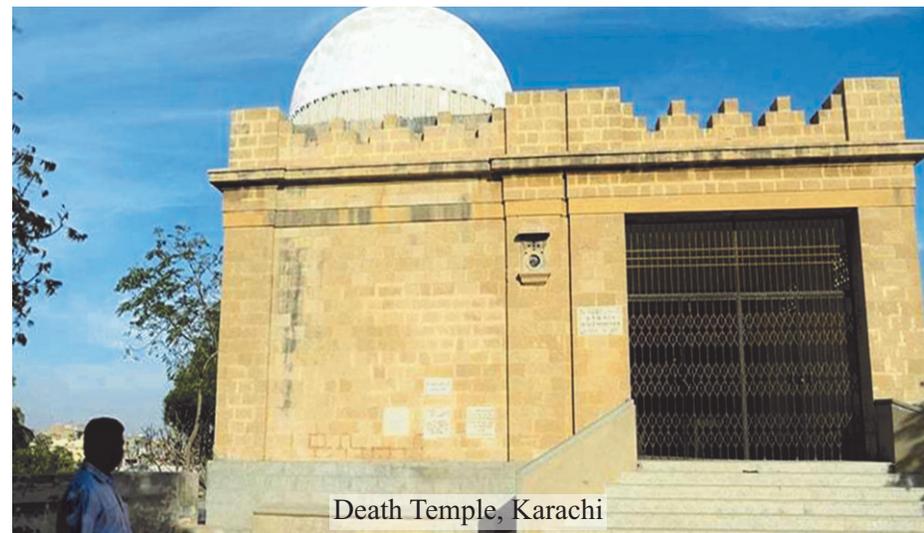
Karachi owes a great debt to its Parsi community, which has established a number of hospitals, educational institutes, hotels and historic buildings. Names like the NED University of Engineering and Technology, Mama Parsi School, Bai Virbaiji Soparivala Parsi High School, DJ Science College, Dow University of Health Sciences, Metropole, Beach Luxury and Avari Hotel, and Anklesaria Hospital are part of the fabric of the city.



Dar-e-Meher H.J Behrana, Karachi



Seth Dossabhoy Meerwanji Daremeher, Karachi



Death Temple, Karachi



શ્રુતિ શ્રુતિ શ્રુતિ

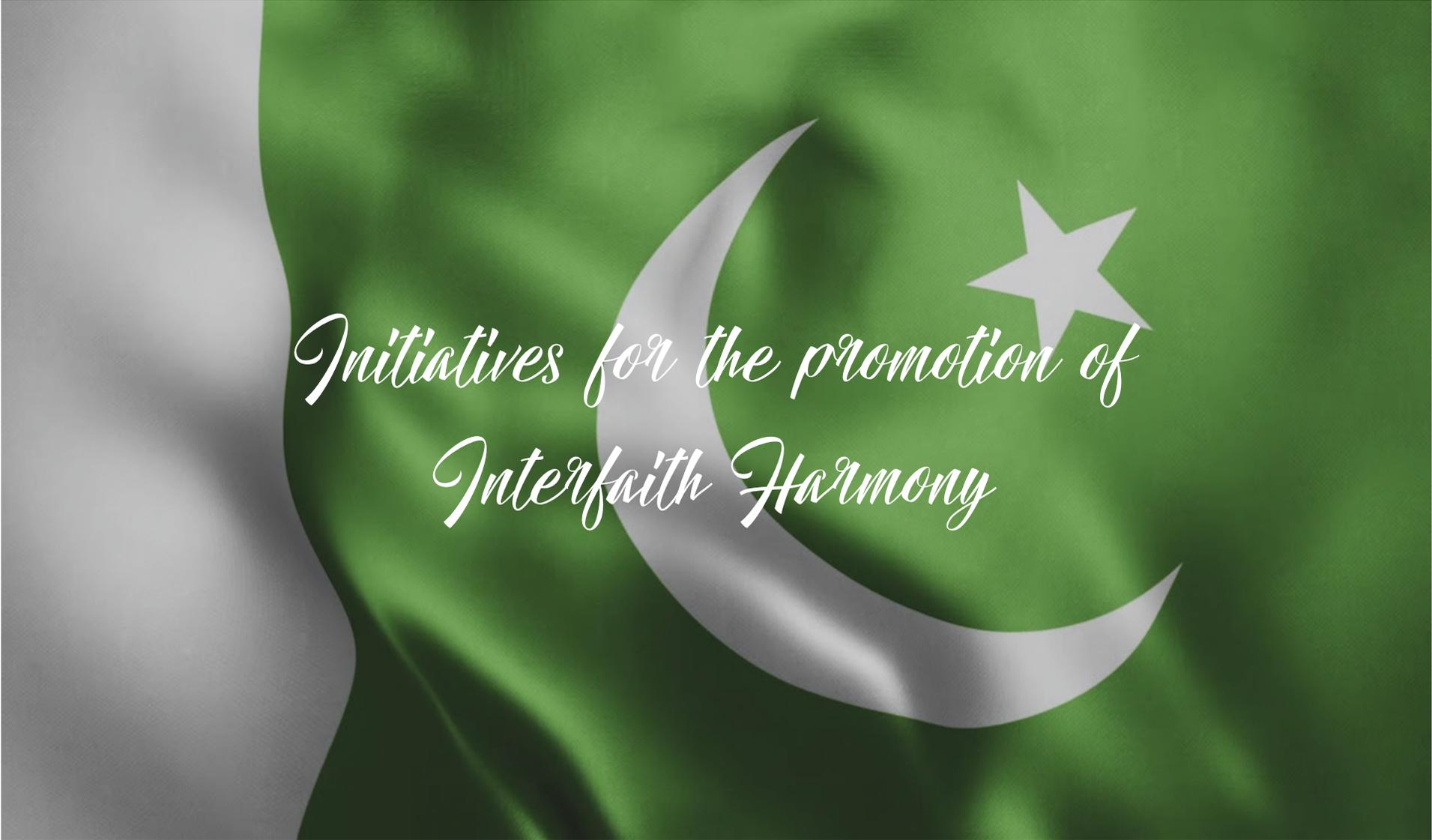
SETH VICCAJI-SETH PESTONJI MEHERJI PARSII FIRE TEMPLE

શ્રી સેત્રામ માલ સ્પેન્ડાર્માડ ૩૦૧૬-૧૧-૧૨-૧૯૧૧



PARSHI FIRE TEMPLE  
ADMISSION ONLY TO  
MALE CONSTITUTIONS

Fire Temple, Hyderabad



*Initiatives for the promotion of  
Interfaith Harmony*

The government of Pakistan has ensured that minority rights remain protected, and they are allowed complete religious freedom. In order to do this, several initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Harmony. 11th August of each year has been declared as “Minorities Day” by the Government of Pakistan. Minorities Day is celebrated at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, officially each year, and the President of Pakistan chairs the function. A Minorities Welfare Fund (MWF) has been operating in this ministry since 1985, under which financial assistance to deserving minority individuals and scholarships to the wards of minority communities are granted.

Year	No. students benefitted	Amount (Rs.)
2018-19	2934	Rs.37.59 M
2019-20	2888	Rs.34.44 M
2020-21	2866	Rs.37.00 M
2021-22	3636	Rs.49.17 M

Details of these scholarships are given in the table below: Financial assistance to deserving minority individuals is granted on the recommendations of the Minister, State Minister for Religious Affairs & Interfaith harmony, four minority Senators and ten minority MNAs.

The total number of minority individuals who have been provided financial assistance during the last years is as under:

Year	No. students benefitted	Amount in Millions
2018-19	3135	12.046
2019-20	4126	15.935
2020-21	3815	13.257
2021-22	3044	13.730

In addition to this, small development schemes for the repair and maintenance of worship places of minority communities are also carried out.

Furthermore, in order to promote interfaith harmony in the country, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Harmony arranges Interfaith Harmony Conferences on various topics every year at Federal and Provincial Headquarters. Federal Minister for RA&IH presides over these meetings, and it is attended by prominent personalities of different minority communities.

The ministry celebrates important religious festivals of minority communities officially every year to promote understanding and harmony among all segments of society. These festivals include Christmas and Easter for Christians, Holi and Diwali for Hindus, Baisakhi and Birthday of Guru Nanak for Sikhs, Nauroze for Zoroastrians, Eid-e-Ridvan for Baha'i's, and Chelum Jusht for Kalash people. Celebrations of these events

bring all segments of society closer to each other for peaceful co-existence. Another very important initiative taken for the promotion of interfaith harmony was the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). The Commission gives recommendations to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Harmony in policy matters. The new NCM consists of six (06) official and Twelve (12) Non-official members (10 Non-Muslim members), with Mr. Chela Ram Kewlani, a prominent Hindu personality, as its Chairman. Thus the newly constituted NCM not only consists of the majority of its membership from Minority communities but its Chairman has also been appointed from a minority community. This has further allowed the government to understand and address the matters related to minority rights.



Eid-e-Ridvan-2022, celebration of Baha'i's community was arranged on 19th May, 2022 at Auditorium of National Library of Pakistan, Islamabad.



Dewali-2021, celebration of Hindu community was arranged on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 at National Sailing Centre, Karachi.



Celebration of Nouroze



Minority Day-2021 celebrations were arranged on 25th August, 2021, (as the 11th of August was falling during Ashura-e-Moharram) at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.





Christians are celebrating Christmas in Pakistan



Gurdwara, Dadyal Mirpur AJK



Directorate of Electronic Media & Publications  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan